

# William Catons Salutation and Advise

unto Gods Elect, of what County, Meeting, or Family soever they are ; ~~And~~ and  
Peace, Joy, and Everlasting Refreshment be multiplied among you all.

**D**Early beloved Friends, my Spirit is and hath been under a deep sence of your joy and pure rejoycing, of your sorrow and sufferings ; And in the midst of it, my heart hath been melted and overcome, with the unspeakable love which hath flowed from my life to youward, when I have beheld your glory and beauty ; your comeliness and purity, your innocency and simplicity ; And these things my spirit hath viewed, and I have beheld them *with much delight*, and my heart hath been so ravished with them, even in the night watch, that sleep hath vanished from me ; And instead of being overtaken with that which nature is subject unto ; *My heart hath been filled with joy, my mouth with the high praise of the Lord upon my bed ;* And therein my soul hath solaced it self, being abundantly revived with the fresh streames of my fathers love, which from my soul hath flowed forth like unto a mighty stream : And though my life hath breathed forth praises abundantly unto the Lord, yet my heart is full, and my cup doth overflow, and my soul is poured forth into your bosoms, where my Fathers love and life is shed abroad, in which I do most dearly salute you.

Oh friends ! your work is *weighty*, your adversaries *many*, and your temptations *not a few*, and these things my soul have weighed, and seriously pondered upon ; And I have observed how the Nations in the most parts where your residence is, are angry with you, and bend their brows against you, and great have your sufferings been (in which the Lord hath not left you *comfortless*.) And so is it with our brethren beyond the Seas, whose faith and patience the Lord tryeth, by their being exercised in manifold Tribulations, but it appears by their writings that the Lord is exceeding good unto them, and that their consolation by his Spirit *abounds* even in the midst of them, which tend to the furtherance of the Gospel ; And truly I am glad when I consider how patiently you have suffered *violence* to be done unto you, without doing *violence* to your adversaries, which thing is become of good report among all that feareth the Lord, who have heard of your long suffering and forbearance, which we have learned of our Lord and Master, *who pleads our cause* and clears our innocency, and testifieth to the faces of your adversaries by his witness that they have *measured that measure* to you which they would not have met unto themselves, but when the cup of *trembling* comes to be put into their hands, then shall they with sorrow and grief of heart remember what they have done unto you, who have patiently sustained grievous sufferings from them, but without controversie many of them who have afflicted you, must drink of that cup of suffering which they have put into your hands, and then shall the *oppressions* wherewith they have *oppressed* you, become their exceeding *heavie* burthen ; But however friends, if the Lord should yet suffer your sufferings to be prolonged and continued for a season, *faint not in your mindes*, but be strong in the power of the Lords might, and be ye tender affectionated one towards another, for an *unspeakable necessity* I see in the Light of the Lord of your being tender one over another, that you may be a comfort and a refreshing one to another in the Lord, in your several *Counties, Meetings and Families*, where you are dispersed and scattered abroad in the Nation and Nations, *as lights in the World*.

And Friends, beware of giving place to that which would gender strife among your selves, and bring you into variance one with another, for that spirit is not of God but of the World, and that will not easily passe by *offences*, but will both give them and take them, neither will that bind up breaches, but make them worse, neither will that edifie the body, but will bring suffering upon it, and the suffering which that spirit brings upon it, is more intollerable for the body then the sufferings that its open adversaries brings upon it, for it will rejoyce in the failings of the weak, and it will be lifted up when the Righteous are cast down, and will look more at the failings of others, then at its own ; Now my advise to you is, to beware of it and watch vigilently against it, as against one of your *greatest and subtillest enemies* of your souls and eternal peace.

And Friends, you that are dispersed abroad in sundry parts of the *Counties*, and it may be, are not above two or three *Families in a Parish*, and peradventure some of the family are friends, and some are not ; Therefore you had need to be vigilant and circumspect ; and also beware of letting in the spirits of them that are of another spirit then that which you are of, lest thereby you loose your *Authority and Dominion* over them, and so bring trouble upon your selves, which may easily befall you, if you be too *intimate and familiar* with them.

Again, you had need to watch over one another in tender love for good, that if you see evil appearing in one another, you may betimes minde one another of it, though I know it will be a greater cross to you to speak to the party that is *guilty*, then it would be for you to speak to another of the thing, and when they come to hear of your acquainting others, with that which concerned them, and you not minding them of the thing before, hence may prejudice arise.

Which when this is gotten up, they in whom it is seated will strive to beget it in others against such as they have prejudice against, and

this will tend rather to the making of *parties* then unto peace ; Therefore be *advised* (Oh ! friends) to take heed of that, and I beseech you in the bowels of love, be perswaded to live in love, peace and unity one with another, and be ye good *paterns and examples* one to another in all things, least that you should bring *burthens* upon one another, which (the Lord knoweth) you had not need to do, for I know all of you in your several places wherein you are set, who are truly under the yoke have much to bear already, so that there is more necessity for your bearing one anothers burthen then there is for your adding unto one anothers burthen. Therefore keep the life in your selves, that in the love which beareth all things, you may be comprehended more and more.

And all you who are *Rulers of Families*, who have the oversight both of children and servants, be ye *Paterns of love*, of meeknesse and wisdom, of diligence and long-suffering, that so your Families may be brought into these things, to the praise of God, and to your comfort ; And beware of tollerating any *evil vice* in your families, by giving too much liberty to that which would be *Idle, Wanton, and Extravagant* ; Oh ! let not that be nourished neither in children nor servant, but stand in the power of God, that his living witness may answer all your words and actions, and justify you in them all, then will you be a terror to that in your families which would *wound* meeknesse, and a praise to that which breathes after the Lord.

And you that have *unbelieving Wives* or *unbelieving Husbands*, *unbelieving Children*, and such servants in your families as are out of the Truth, walk wisely towards them in all things ; And strive not with them in your *wills* in that nature which they are in, lest you hurt your selves thereby and harden them ; And know this, that such will sooner be won to the truth by your *Loving and Courteous behaviour* towards them, then they will by your striving with them in the heat of your spirits ; and when you feel indignation arise in your hearts against their *Uncleanness, Rudeness, & Wantonnesse*, and so upon the feeling of that may fall a threshing and judging that in them which the indignation in you riseth against ; then take heed of a mixture, I mean of that which is *hasty*, and *forward* in your selves, mixing it self with the *godly zeal* in you, and that may kindle a *strange fire* in them, which will not consume that which the Lords indignation burns against, but will rather set their *whole course of nature on fire*, and then you may shew more wisdom in your forbearing to strive with them, till that be somewhat over, then you would by your continuing beating and threshing that which is not capable of your judgment ; For this I have observed (to wit) that the truth of God hath much more place in a man, if it be spoken to him when he is *calm, temperate and patient*, then it hath if it be declared to him when he is *rouse, boisterous and passionate*, which naturally many men are subject to upon *provocation*, as we our selves heretofore have been, when we were where they are ; therefore let us the rather bear with them, considering how our Lord and Saviour hath born with us, who have obtained mercy from him, Glory, Honour and Renown be to his Name for ever and ever.

And Oh ye *Children and Servants* ! be subject and obedient unto your *Parents and Superiours* in the Lord, and be not *froward and perverse, wilful, nor obstinate*, but *dutiful and submissive, tractable and condescending* to every of their equal and just *requirings*, that there may be no variance, strife, emulation nor contention in your families, but that love and peace may abound among you all ; And see that you flee and avoid all *youthful lusts*, and that you put away *childishness*, and become *grave, sober, and discreet*, daily provoking one another to love and to good works, and not to lightness nor wantonness, nor to folly and vanity which doth not become Saints ; And withall be ye perswaded and advised to dwell together in unity, love and peace, and be ye helpful one to another in what you may ; And thereby *engage* you one another in love to serve one another, and thereby you will come to be endeared one unto another, and so will come to be refreshed together with the sweet sincere milk of the Word of life from the breasts of consolation.

Moreover Friends, as touching your meetings, let them be kept duely and orderly (while you may) in the Wisdom and Counsel of the Lord, and observe the time that is appointed for friends to meet, that it may no longer be observed by friends, that it is oftentimes *an hour or two*, after the time appointed before friends be wholly gathered, this ought not to be, for several inconveniences attend this neglect, wherefore from henceforth (Oh Friends ! ) be perswaded and advised to amend it.

These things were upon me to lay before you, Oh ! my dearly beloved, to whom my heart is open, and often doth my life extend it self from Sea to Sea to meet you, and dearly to salute you in the bowels of intire love, which full often yearns towards you ; Oh ! you fairest and dearest of all the Families of the Earth, God Almighty multiply his peace among you, and with his living presence *perpetually* accompany you, so shall all Nations call you blessed ; Farewel in the Lord from henceforth and for evermore.

Let this be read in your meetings and Families, when you see a service for it.